

### What is a Nursing Care Delivery System? Why is it important?

Care delivery systems describe how organizations approach the care delivered to patients and family members. Care delivery systems define nursing as a *profession rather than a task-based job*. It provides structures that allow the nurse to function as a professional and colleague, and supports the organization and effective use of resources.

### The UVA Nursing Care Delivery System:

The care delivery system endorsed by the UVA NPGO is Relationship-based Care. Relationship-based Care identifies the three fundamental relationships that define the patient experience: the nurses' relationships to self, to colleagues, and to patients and families. This system emphasizes the human aspect of care and the relationships that surround the patient.



There are seven principles of Relationship-based Care:

**Caring and healing environment:** The combination of therapeutic relationships and a physical environment that meets the needs and comfort of the patient and family members, promotes healing.

**Leadership:** Every nurse has a leadership role in providing care. Nursing leadership supports the emergence of caring and compassionate leaders from all levels of the organization.

**Teamwork:** Every individual nurse is accountable for his or her own actions, supports the success of those around them and contributes to the mission of the organization.

**Professional nursing practice:** Nurses embrace a set of technical and ethical standards, ongoing self-improvement and development, and accountability for autonomy. Nurses are guides, healers, collaborators, teachers, and leaders.

**Patient care delivery:** Continuity of care is of great value to the patient and supports the relationship between the patient and the nurse. The four elements that define any care delivery system:

1. Nurse/patient relationship and decision-making
2. Work allocation and/or patient assignments
3. Communication between members of the health care team
4. Management of the unit environment

**Resource-driven practice:** Focus is on what resources are available and prioritization of what matters most to the patient and family.

**Outcomes measurement:** Patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes data are used to inspire and motivate so that members of the team understand their relationship to the outcomes they influence.

Koloroutis, M. (2004) *Relationship-based Care: A model for transforming practice*. Minneapolis, MN: Creative Health Care Management.